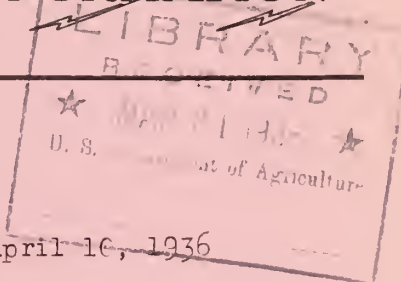


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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, April 10, 1936

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "EASTER FOOD." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, United States Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

What I have for you today, listeners, is an Easter collection -- a collection of ideas for your Easter menus that I have picked up at random. If you aren't quite certain what you will serve for Sunday morning breakfast, or if you are looking for good dishes for Easter dinner or supper -- well, maybe these spring ideas from the Bureau of Home Economics may help you out.

First, about breakfast. Several breakfast thoughts come to my mind. I'm sure that on Easter morning the spring fruits are the ones to suit the occasion -- rhubarb, strawberries, maybe fresh pineapples. If you prefer juice to whole fruits for breakfast, how about rhubarb and pineapple juice, mixed and chilled? Pineapple and prune juice is another good combination. In fact, the more you experiment in mixing fruit juices, the more delicious combinations you will find. The foods people suggest that the best results usually come from mixing a sweet juice with a sour juice, and a colorful juice with a white juice.

Speaking of rhubarb, reminds me of a spring breakfast-spread that you can serve with hot cross buns. This is rhubarb conserve. You make it with rhubarb, oranges, lemons, blanched almonds and sugar. Add a bit of salt to bring out the flavor. The foods people have had good results using 1 quart of rhubarb, cut up with the skin on, with 2 pounds of sugar, 2 oranges, and 2 lemons -- cut in small pieces. You cook the fruit and sugar together until the mixture is thick and clear. Then you add the blanched, cut-up almonds, and pour the hot conserve into hot sterilized jelly glasses.

As I said, this may be the very spread you've been wanting to serve on your breakfast toast or muffins or hot cross buns.

Speaking of hot cross buns, these originally were the special bread for Good Friday, but nowadays many people serve them during the whole of Easter week. The name applies not to the mixture but rather to the cross formed on top of the bun. But the traditional hot cross bun is always yeast bread. Some cooks form the cross by making 2 small slashes across the center-top of the bun before baking, thus forming a right-angled cross. Others simply make a cross with white icing. Most hot cross buns have a sweet glaze over the top. Some have currants and cinnamon in the mixture. Others are plain. Any good recipe for raised rolls will make these buns -- that recipe for icebox rolls that I once gave you, for example.

I couldn't let Easter get away without saying something about eggs. Of all the foods that fit into Easter meals, eggs fit the best. Starting with the first meal of the day, suppose I list some of the possibilities for Easter egg-dishes.

I don't know who the man Benedict was who first invented the dish that goes by the name of "eggs benedict." But I have always thought he had an inspiration when he put that dish together. Such a simple idea and such a good one for breakfast, lunch or supper. If you want something different for Easter morning breakfast -- well, I'll tell you how to make eggs benedict. Toast slices of bread. On each piece of toast place a thin slice of cooked ham or crisp cooked bacon. On top of this, place a poached egg. Cover with hot Hollandaise sauce. That's eggs benedict, listeners -- build it with toast for the foundation, sliced ham or bacon on top of the toast, poached egg on top of that, and hot Hollandaise sauce over all.

Since the success of this dish depends so much on having the egg poached exactly right, maybe I better review the points for perfect poaching. These are: Low heat for cooking the egg; salt or vinegar in the cooking water; care in getting the egg in and out of the pan; and a cover over the pan to hold in the heat. It all comes down to this. You break your egg into a saucer and slide the egg gently into boiling, salted water in a shallow pan. Have enough water in the pan to cover the egg. Immediately cover the pan and remove it from the flame. Let it stand about 5 minutes. Then take the eggs out carefully with a perforated spoon.

As perhaps you know, either salt or vinegar in the water helps coagulate the egg white so helps hold the poached egg in shape. If the water is not boiling too violently when you slide the egg in, it won't break up the egg. No doubt you also know that the fresher the egg is, the better it is for poaching, because fresh egg-white scatters less in water.

Well, I mustn't continue talking about poaching eggs when I'd like to suggest an omelet for Sunday morning breakfast -- an omelet with a filling of chopped ham or such spring vegetables as cooked green peas or asparagus or mushrooms. Another good omelet filler is a mixture of chopped onion, green pepper, celery and parsley delicately fried in butter before adding to the egg mixture.

Egg salad is another favorite Easter egg-dish. A bowl of crisp watercress and slices hard-cooked eggs with French dressing is one idea. Deviled eggs and spring greens is another.

As for Easter dinner, maybe you'll have a roast of lamb with mint sauce or mint stuffing. Maybe you'll have a veal roast with asparagus and new potatoes. Or maybe you'll have broiled spring chicken. Favorites among the spring vegetables are spring greens, new green onions, green peas, asparagus, green beans, and the newer vegetables now in most markets of the country -- avocados, artichokes, and broccoli.

Since mint is such a refreshing flavor and makes such good company for the meats just mentioned, a mint ice cream or mint jelly with sponge cake or angel cake are ideas for topping off Easter dinner.

